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ON PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND; ITS ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICAL OPERATION. By Alpheus Todd, Librarian to the House of Commons of Canada, in two volumes. Vol II., London: Longman, Green & Co., 1869.

This is emphatically one of the books of the day, whether we look at it with reference to the subject treated of, the clearness, comprehensiveness of its arrangement, or the great learning evinced in its preparation.

We may well feel proud that in Canada has been found a writer who has supplied to England a work which, if we can believe contemporary critics, and if our own humble judgment does not lead us astray, is destined to be, as has been said of it by an English critic, "an authority on the important subject of which it treats, and which ought to have a place along with Sir Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice and Constitutional History, on the shelves of every member of the Legislature." The author is not "without honor in his own country," for who that pretends to know anything of the inside of the Houses of Parliament in Canada but knows, as many have experienced, the ready courtesy and research that has solved and explained so many troublesome doubts on points of Parliamentary Practice or Constitutional Law. But this work will give Mr. Todd a reputation as a writer such as few possess, for wherever the Anglo-Saxon law extends, or wherever exist the principles of Parliamentary Government such as we have it and such as it is in England, this book will be the great authority. Mr. Todd's familiarity with the subject, was known years before he gave the public the benefit of his learning—but it is one thing to be thoroughly conversant with a subject, and another to sit down steadily and methodically to commit that knowledge to paper, in such a way as to bring the whole of an intricate and little understood subject clearly and intelligently before the reader, and that with apt authority and example for each proposition. In this Mr. Todd has succeeded in a way that has called forth the admiration of exacting reviewers in England, and of those who are most competent to form an opinion as to its intrinsic merits. In fact to repeat the first sentence of the review of this elaborate work in *The Law*

Magazine (August, 1869), "There could be no better exposition of the theory and practice of Parliamentary Government in England than that contained in the treatise of Mr. Todd, now completed by the volume before us." Or as another reviewer says, "Every Englishman who can read should read this book."

The second volume commences with an enquiry into and description of the councils of the Crown under prerogative governments, and it is curious to remark, though the observation is not novel, the wonderful similarity, taking times and circumstances into consideration between the relative powers of, and interdependence between the sovereign and his Witan or Council in the Saxon period, and the Kings, Lords and Commons of the present day.

The author gives an interesting account of the increasing and encroaching influence of the Sovereigns from the time of the Norman Kings down to the reign of the second Stuart, when the overwhelming power of the kingly office received its death blow; upon which followed the development of constitutional government and the increasing influence of the Council, known afterwards as the Cabinet Council, which since the time of the Saxons and up to the time of Wm. III., had been more or less "a pliant instrument in the hands of the reigning monarch, but was made responsible to Parliament by the Revolution of 1688."

In the second chapter the present position, history, powers and responsibilities of the Privy Council under parliamentary government are discussed, and here the attention of the reader is drawn to the main distinction between the Privy Council and the Cabinet Council:—

"Ever since the separate existence of the Cabinet Council as a governmental body, meetings of the Privy Council have ceased to be holden, for purposes of deliberation. At the commencement of the reign of George III., we find this distinction between the two councils clearly recognised—that the one is assembled for deliberative, and the other merely for formal and ceremonial purposes. It is, in fact, an established principle, that 'it would be contrary to constitutional practice that the sovereign should preside at any council where deliberation or discussion takes place.'

At meetings of the Privy Council, the sovereign occupies the chair. The President of the Council sits at the Queen's left hand; it being noticeable that this functionary 'does not possess the authority usually exercised by